

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Previously presented) A node in an Ethernet network to relay an Ethernet frame, comprising:  
  
an element which inserts two or more VLAN tags into said frame and removes an other said inserted VLAN tag in a relay process of said frame.
2. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:  
  
an element which replaces two or more VLAN tags of said frame at a time.
3. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:  
  
an element which administrates said two or more VLAN tags using a forwarding table memory for a change of frame contents during a frame relay.
4. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:  
  
an element which searches a forwarding table memory using an information from two or more VLAN tags in said frame during a frame relay.
5. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:  
  
an element which searches a forwarding table memory in a relay process of said frame with a combination of an information from two or more VLAN tags in said frame and an input port, a destination MAC address, a source MAC address and a TYPE field information.

6. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, further comprising an element which:

provides a TTL area to show a survival time of a frame in said VLAN tag inserted to said frame;

checks whether said survival time has elapsed or not by a value in said TTL area; and discards said frame after elapse of said survival time without relaying said frame in a relay process of said frame.

7. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 6, further comprising:

an element which decrements the value in said TTL area by one every time said frame is relayed.

8. (Currently amended) A node as set forth in claim 1, wherein

~~node network~~ control information is stored to said VLAN tag, said network control information not restricted to a 64-byte minimum frame size restriction of network control information, as defined by a standard of said Ethernet.

9. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

an element which changes a self-node status administration corresponding to a content of said VLAN tag.

10. (Previously presented) A node as set forth in claim 1, wherein

a node status is stored to an area of said VLAN tag in the relayed frame corresponding

to a self-node status.

11. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method of a node to relay an Ethernet frame, said method comprising:
  - receiving an Ethernet frame in said node;
  - inserting two or more VLAN tags to said Ethernet frame at a time or removing said inserted VLAN tags; and
  - forwarding said Ethernet frame.
12. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, wherein a forwarding table memory for frame contents change during a frame relay is used for administration of said two or more VLAN tags.
13. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, wherein a forwarding table memory is searched during a frame relay using an information from two or more VLAN tags in said frame.
14. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, wherein a forwarding table memory is searched in a relay process of said frame with a combination of an information from two or more VLAN tags in said frame and an input port, a destination MAC address, a source MAC address and a TYPE field information.
15. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, wherein:

a TTL area to show a survival time of the frame is provided in said VLAN tag that is inserted to said frame;

whether said survival time has been elapsed or not is checked by a value in said TTL area; and

said frame after elapse of said survival time is discarded without being relayed in the relay process of said frame.

16. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the value in said TTL area is decremented by one every time said frame is relayed.
17. (Currently amended) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, wherein ~~a node~~ network control information is stored to said VLAN tag, said network control information not restricted to a 64-byte minimum frame size restriction of network control information, as defined by a standard of said Ethernet.
18. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, further comprising:  
changing a self-node status administration corresponding to contents of said VLAN tag.
19. (Previously presented) A frame transfer method as set forth in claim 11, wherein a node status is stored to said VLAN tag area in the relayed frame corresponding to a self-node status.

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20. (New) The node of claim 8, wherein said network control information comprises 32-bit network control tags.